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GURLEY, MARIANNE BELL. Ceramic Objects: Containers and Handpieces.  
(1972) Directed by Mr. Gilbert F. Carpenter. Pp. 3

This thesis exhibition contains a selection of high-fired ceramic  
objects of porcelain and stoneware.

CONTAINERS AND HANDPIECES

Marianne Bell Gurley

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro,  
N.C., 1972

Approved by

*[Signature]*  
Thesis Advisor

CERAMIC OBJECTS:

CONTAINERS AND HANDPIECES

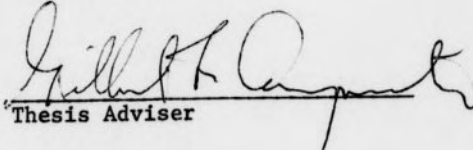
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the  
Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro.

Thesis  
Director

Gilbert K. Carpenter

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Gilbert K. Carpenter

Charles Davis

Robert A. Foster

Joan Gregory

May 3, 1972  
Date of Examination

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Gilbert Carpenter, Dr. Joan Gregory, and Mr. Peter Agostini, members of the Faculty of the Department of Art, and Dr. Charles Davis, member of the Faculty of the Department of English, for their opinions and assistance.

# CATALOGUE

1. Untitled	stoneware
2. Untitled	stoneware
3. Untitled	stoneware
4. Untitled	porcelain
5. Untitled	stoneware and walnut
6. Untitled	stoneware
7. Untitled	stoneware
8. Untitled	stoneware
9. Untitled	stoneware and walnut
10. Untitled	stoneware
11. Untitled	stoneware
12. Untitled	stoneware
13. Untitled	porcelain
14. Untitled	stoneware
15. Untitled	stoneware
16. Untitled	stoneware
17. Untitled	stoneware
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32. Untitled	stoneware
33. Untitled	stoneware

#### CERAMIC OBJECTS: CONTAINERS AND HANDPIECES

My thesis consists of ceramic objects made of stoneware and porcelain. I have been working with clay for three years and find myself becoming both more comfortable with and more excited by the possibilities of the material.

In making clay objects, whether wheelthrown or handbuilt, there must be concern for both form and surface. As I work, the form may become the most important aspect of one piece, while in another the surface may dictate the form. With some of the ceramic objects the inner surface becomes the primary interest, while in others the outer surface is dominant. The glaze must enhance the ceramic object, but it cannot replace sensitivity in shape and proportion.

That contour which is the touching of form and surrounding space defines the spirit of a ceramic piece. As I work toward the final shaping of a piece on the wheel, the fingers of my left hand often press outward to swell the form as my eyes watch the side of the piece until that edge seems to vibrate, in a sense, between the surface of the object and the space surrounding the object. This edge or contour is, of course, controlled by the space which the piece encloses. It is a matter of personal judgment and style as to the openness or closedness of a form. In most Greek pottery, for instance, the forms are closed spatially while many Sung Dynasty Chinese pieces open themselves to the intrusion of space. I find that the pieces of my work which are most satisfying and seem to hold the essence of my personal style have a certain vitality and openness--an outward thrust. The lips of some pieces turn outward to open up the forms. In others the

lips may be turned in toward the inner space and this clay edge touches the darkness held within the shape. This enclosed darkness seems to have a force which pushes the belly of the piece to its smooth, swelling curve. The clay object is formed of a combination of often contrasting forces: color beside color, glaze on glaze, dull matt pushing against watery shine, rough clay meeting cool, smooth glaze.

The aesthetic quality of a ceramic object is dependent upon much more than the mere existence of a clay surface of shape. A clay form does not always have aesthetic worth any more than a painting always has intrinsic value. In dealing with ceramic objects, one often has to look at the object in its setting or perhaps as a setting. Its aesthetic quality is not just a matter of eye appeal when the object is isolated and exhibited. If the piece is functional, the way in which it functions is inseparable as an aesthetic consideration. How it works and how it feels in the hand of the user merges with what visual notions one has about the piece.

In the work now exhibited, size has been limited in order to foster a closeness between the ceramic object and the viewer or, hopefully, the holder of the object. At this stage, I am interested in making small pieces which invite intimacy by drawing the viewer to the objects rather than forcing him to withdraw in order to see the objects properly. I wish to bring the participant into personal sensual contact with the ceramic object, to offer curving forms and explorable surfaces which will bring joy through visual and tactile experience.



## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The ceramic objects exhibited are of two types of high-fired ceramic material: stoneware and porcelain. The objects were bisque-fired to Orton cone 04 and glaze-fired in an Alpine gas kiln to cone 10 in a reduction atmosphere. Thrown pieces were made on a kick wheel. Glazes were applied by various methods: pouring, dipping, and brushing.